

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.

1895.

WASHINGTON:  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.  
1896.

## REPORT OF NAVAJO AGENCY.

NAVAJO AGENCY,  
Fort Defiance, Ariz., August 29, 1895.

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following annual report of this agency:

## NAVAJOS.

The general failure of their crops last season left the Navajoes without sufficient food to carry them through the winter, and great suffering resulted. The issue of limited quantities of flour to the destitute doubtless saved many lives. A special appropriation by the last Congress for the purchase of seeds and farming implements will go far toward setting them on their feet again. They have planted more this year than ever before, and the prospect of a good harvest is very promising at present.

During last winter they lost many sheep and ponies from cold and starvation; besides which they were obliged to kill and eat a large number for want of other food. This decrease in their sheep, coming at a time when wool brings them but little, has turned their minds to agriculture. This disposition should be encouraged by a storage of the water-fall in the rainy season and its economical distribution for farming purposes at the proper time, to the end that all the arable land available may be cultivated. An appropriation of money for this purpose has been made by Congress; but, unfortunately, the execution of the work has been intrusted to a person who is not familiar with the proper methods. It is to be hoped that recent investigations made under the orders of the Department may result in his dismissal and the appointment of a competent man in his place.

The agency boarding school and the day school at Little Water have been overcrowded with pupils during the past year, and there is a general request all over the reservation for more schools. By next winter there will be built five new schools, with accommodations for 200 pupils, and more will be added if the demand justifies it. The enrollment at the two schools now in operation is about 180, and the pupils are apt and intelligent.

There is a mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, under the charge of Miss Mary A. Tripp, on the San Juan River, where a good work is going on. Here the material as well as the spiritual wants of the Indians have been attended to. The mission at the agency has been abandoned, but only temporarily, owing to the ill health of the missionary.

The work of Mrs. Mary L. Eldridge, the field matron on the San Juan River, can not be too highly commended. Her life is one of hardship and devotion, and whatever she undertakes she does well.

The building of a mission hospital by the Woman's Auxiliary of the Episcopal Church is now going on under the supervision of Miss Eliza W. Thackera, the superintendent, and its completion will provide a much-needed place for the proper care and treatment of the sick. In the meantime Miss Thackera renders valuable assistance to the agency physician.

The court of Indian offenses relieves the agent from the investigation and settlement of many disputes, and no appeals from its decisions have been made.

No serious crimes have been committed upon the reservation, but outside there have been two cases of homicide, one being in self-defense and the other a murder not yet fully investigated by the authorities. In both instances all the parties engaged were Indians.

No allotments of lands in severalty have been made upon this reservation.

The Navajoes are cheerful, lively, and talkative, exceedingly generous to one another, and they are not quarrelsome. There is great affection between parents and children, and the latter are rarely punished. They are extravagant and improvident, and gambling is common. There are many industrious men among them who set a good example for the rest, and as a rule the men do their share of the work.

## MOQUI INDIANS.

These Indians have been taught by experience to store up corn in good years, so that they suffered comparatively little for want of food last winter. Their crops will be large this year.

The school at Keams Canyon is well attended, as are also the day schools at the first and third mesas. There is no school as yet at the second mesa, but I hope to start one soon.

The mission at the second mesa has been abandoned, but the Mennonite mission at the third mesa (Oreiba) is still maintained under the direction of the excellent missionary, Rev. Mr. H. R. Voth, who is earnest and untiring in his work.

In the pueblo of Oreiba there are two factions, called by the whites the "friendlies" and the "hostiles," in about the proportion of 1 to 2. The friendlies send their

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children to school, and are willing to adopt civilized ways; the hostiles, under the bad influence of the shamans, believe that the abandonment of the old ways will be followed by drought and famine, to avert which they wish to drive the friendlies out. Last fall they took away the fields at Moenkopi from the friendlies, and threatened to do the same thing at Oreiba in the spring. They said they would resort to arms if necessary, and I was obliged to call for troops to assist in arresting the ringleaders. Nineteen men were arrested and turned over to the military, by whom they are now held in confinement at Alcatraz Island, in San Francisco Harbor. This action settled the question, at least for the present.

No allotments on this reservation have been confirmed, and it is not advisable to confirm any, for reasons already laid before the Department. Some allotments have been made at Moenkopi, off the reservation, of lands which have been tilled by the Indians for many years. These allotments should be confirmed without any further delay, to settle false claims of white men. It is my firm belief that there will be a conflict of arms at this place next spring unless this long-pending land question is settled. The delay is not the fault of anyone in the Indian service, and if there should be trouble the responsibility will properly be laid at the door of the Land Office.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

CONSTANT WILLIAMS,

Captain, Seventh Infantry, Acting Agent.

The COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.

REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT OF NAVAJO SCHOOL.

FORT DEFIANCE, ARIZ., July 5, 1895.

SIR: In compliance with instructions, I have the honor to submit this my first annual report of the Navajo boarding school.

On my arrival here, September 12, 1894, I found the school in operation, with 70 pupils in attendance, most of these having been here part, if not all, of the vacation.

Our enrollment reached 185, 32 of whom were transferred during the year to nonreservation schools, 10 were withdrawn at the request of the physician, and several ran away, leaving us at the close of the year with an enrollment of 130.

We carried about twice as many boys as girls. With five exceptions our girls were under 12 years of age. Laundry, kitchen, and sometimes dining-room details had to be made from the boys' force.

Not having an assistant seamstress, the work in that department needed all girls fit to handle the needle. A great deal of sewing was turned out and of a creditable character.

Laundry work was poor and unsatisfactory, but with the discouragements met with in that department we were obliged to be patient. Owing to freezing up of pipes, all water used during the winter was carried in pails from a muddy stream near by, and, although utterly unfit for use, had to do.

The school course of study was followed as closely as possible. Schoolroom work was divided into four departments. At first two of these occupied rooms in the boys' building, the other two in the girls' building. The want of these rooms for other purposes was very much felt, as neither girls nor boys had anywhere to assemble outside their dormitories.

An old commissary adjacent to the school buildings was cleaned, ceiled, and made available, with a curtain drawn, for two schools, thus leaving a room in each building for assembly. This old commissary, although a miserable makeshift, has been of untold value to us, serving for schoolrooms, general assembly, and chapel. We still feel pressed for room and would urge the necessity of a school building.

Agriculture has been and always will be uphill work here. Very little can be raised at this altitude (7,500 feet), owing to the cold nights. Icicles an inch in diameter and more than a foot long were plentiful on the morning of June 20. The school garden last year yielded some nice onions, a few beans, and quite a lot of fine beets. Potatoes were a failure.

The health of the school has been good. With the exception of a few slight attacks of pneumonia there has been no sickness to speak of.

The Navajoes are certainly as apt as any, and are blessed with the good memories characteristic of the race. Why the school children should be so far behind those of other tribes we have worked with is a mystery, unless it can be laid to the heretofore irregular attendance. By exhortation and every means that tact could devise we succeeded in a great measure in breaking up the practice of constant going and coming, since which time our children have made marked improvement, and we have felt that we were going forward. It can not but be that this school will do more for the Navajoes in the coming years than it has in the past.

A great source of regret is the fact that we have made so little progress in English speaking. Practically, the language of the school has been Navajo. We lay it mostly to two causes—first, the constant intercourse with outside friends, and, secondly, to want of that "eternal vigilance" on the part of employees necessary to accomplish what we should in that line. This is a point to be worked up before we can reach a fair standard. With the above exception, we claim a successful year.

Our wants are many, but none so pressing as that of a good system of water supply and sewerage. We have great reason to feel thankful to Major Williams, our good agent, for his hearty support and kindly interest.

With many thanks for kindness and courtesy shown us, I am, very respectfully, yours,

ELLA L. PATTERSON,

Superintendent Navajo Boarding School.

The SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIAN SCHOOLS.

\* Since released. See page 97.